

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2024)

Wright Family Home

14-16 Queen Street, Georgetown, Town of Halton Hills

April 2024

Project Personnel

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1.0 Property Description

14-16 Queen Street	
Municipality	Georgetown, Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Region of Halton
Legal Description	LT 7, PL 37, SE OF QUEEN ST; HALTON HILLS PIN: 250400080
Construction Date	c.1880s
Original Use	Residential
Current Use	Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	Joseph McIntosh
Architectural Style	Gothic Revival
Additions/Alterations	Rear Addition
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town’s Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Laura Loney
Report Date	April 2024

2.0 Background

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 14-16 Queen Street in Halton Hills, Ontario (Figure 1 and Figure 2). The report includes an evaluation of the property’s cultural heritage value as prescribed by the *Ontario Heritage Act*.



Figure 1: Location Map – 14-16 Queen Street



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 14-16 Queen Street

2.1 Historical Background

Indigenous History

The enduring history of First Nation Peoples in Halton Hills can be traced back through time immemorial before contact with Europeans in the 1600s. Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the Credit River was central to Indigenous ways of life, supporting settlements, fisheries, horticulture, transportation, and trade. Iroquoian-speaking peoples, ancestors of the Wendat, occupied the Credit River Valley for hundreds of years until the mid-1600s, establishing semi-permanent villages. There are numerous archaeological sites in Halton Hills dating from this period, ranging from village sites to burial grounds, which reveal a rich cultural heritage.

The Wendat were displaced by the Haudenosaunee around 1649-50 amid the conflicts that arose between European colonial powers and their First Nation allies. The Mississaugas (part of the Anishinaabe Nation) arrived in southern Ontario in the 1690s, settling in two groups along the north shore of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. The western group, occupying the area between Toronto and Lake Erie, became known as the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Until the early 19th century, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation followed a seasonal cycle of movement and resource harvesting along the Credit River (Missinnihe, meaning “trusting creek”), and other rivers. In the winter months, extended family groups hunted in the Halton Hills area, travelling south towards the mouth of the river in the spring for the salmon run. The Mississaugas’ fisheries and traditional economies were diminished because of increased Euro-colonial settlement, leading to a state of impoverishment and dramatic population decline.

In 1818, the British Crown negotiated the purchase of 648,000 acres of land from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, including present-day Halton Hills, under the Ajetance Treaty (No. 19), named after Chief Ajetance. This left the Mississaugas with three small reserves on the Lake Ontario shoreline. The legitimacy of early land “surrenders” to the Crown is questionable when considering the Mississaugas’ traditional understanding of property ownership. Unlike the British, the Mississaugas understood land in spiritual terms, and did not share the idea that access to land and resources could be given up permanently¹.

Joseph McIntosh

Lot 7, Plan 37 was first sold to John Cummings by George Kennedy and his wife in 1864. In 1872, Cummings sold the lot to Joseph Barber who, four years later, sold to William McCullough. In 1880, McCullough and his wife sold the property to farmers John and Isabella McIntosh for \$175.

The property was sold to their son Joseph McIntosh in 1887 for \$2000, indicating a structure had likely been constructed between 1880 and 1887.

¹ This brief overview of Pre-Treaty Indigenous Territory within the land now known as Halton Hills is taken from the Town of Halton Hills’ 2023 *Cultural Heritage Strategy*. This document includes additional recommendations relating to Truth and Reconciliation in Heritage Planning as part of the Town's commitment to advancing Truth and Reconciliation.



Figure 3: Subject property identified on the 1822 Patent Plan



Figure 4: Subject property identified on Tremaine's 1818 Map of the County of Halton

Joseph Alexander McIntosh (1861-1911) was one of several children born to John and Isabelle McIntosh of Esquesing Township. The 1911 Census and death records identifies McIntosh, unmarried, as an inmate of the King Edward Sanatorium in the County of York the year of his death, which was due to tuberculosis, or “phthisis pulmonalis”.

Cook and Leslie Families

In 1890, Daniel Cook purchased the property from McIntosh. Daniel Cook (1832-1915) was born on a farm on Tenth Line which had been established by his father John C. Cook, who had taken part in the 1837 rebellion. Daniel Cook’s grandfather had been a C.E. Loyalist who was killed at Queenston Heights in the war of 1812. In 1890, Cook gave up farming and moved to Georgetown. The 1891 Census identifies Cook as living in Georgetown with his wife Jane (nee Noble) (1835-1905) and three daughters, Margaret, Nellie, and Hallie. The 1911 Census identifies that Daniel, then 79, was living on Queen Street with his daughter Margaret (then 47).

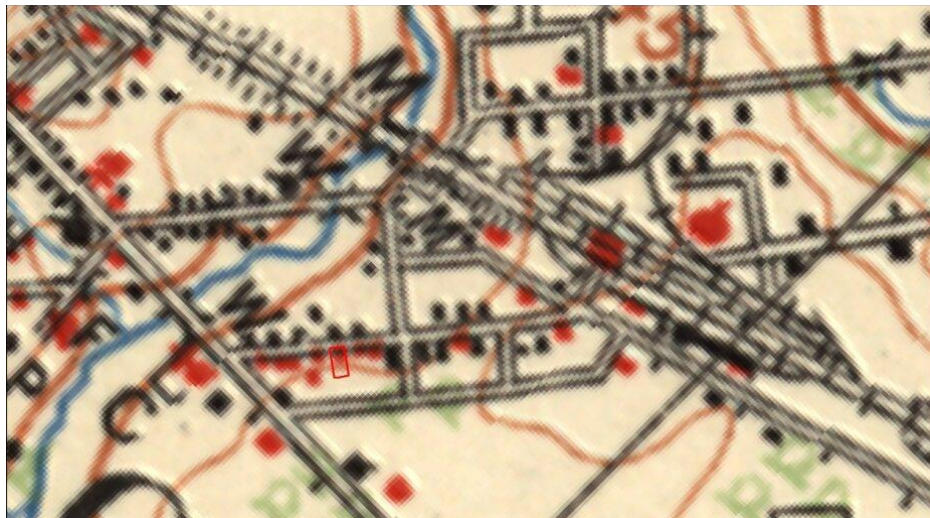


Figure 5: Subject property identified on the 1909 National Topographic Map

In 1916, the property was purchased by Martha and George Leslie. Martha Anne Leslie (nee Cook) (1832-1915) was Daniel and Jane Cook's daughter. Martha's husband, George Leslie Sr. (1856-1940), was a farmer, and at the time of his death was living at Lot 16, Concession 5 in Esquesing Township.

The 1921 census identifies George Leslie and Martha Leslie at 112 Queen Street in Georgetown in a frame house with Margaret (Martha's sister) and their daughter Jean; it is likely then that they owned more than one property along Queen Street as the existing building is brick.

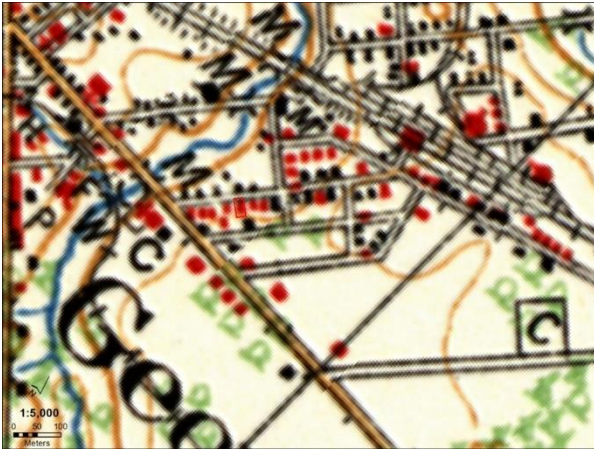


Figure 6: Subject property identified on the 1922 National Topographic Map

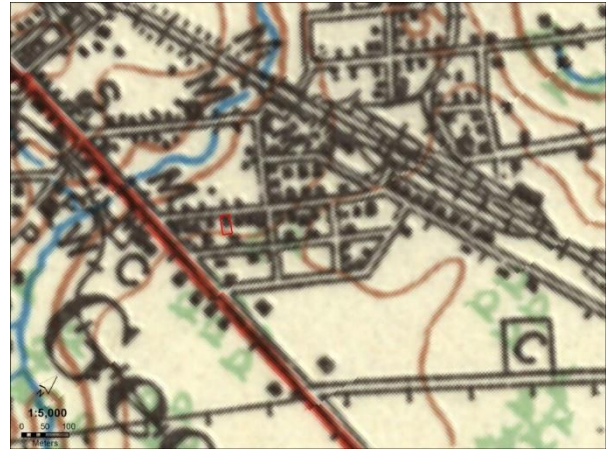


Figure 7: Subject property identified on the 1938 National Topographic Map

Tost Family

In 1923 the property was sold to machinist Frederick Tost. Frederick George Tost (1869-1926) was born in Stewarttown to Henry and Margaret Tosts, and married Josephine (nee Thompson) (1872-1948). The 1931 Census identifies Josephine as living on Queen Street with sons Frank and Jack (who worked at the Provincial Paper Mill) following Frederick's death in 1926.



Figure 8: Subject property identified on the 1934 Fire Insurance Plan of Georgetown

Wright Family & The Exchange Hotel

In 1923, a mortgage was granted to Harry Wright from Frederick Tost and his wife for \$2800. In 1937, the property was transferred to Arvilla Wright, then a widow, who owned the property for almost 30 years.

Arvilla Wright (nee Beer) (1882-1961) was married to Henry (Harry) Wright (1868-1930), and together they were the proprietors of the Exchange Hotel. Before their move to Georgetown, Arvilla and Henry had previously operated hotels in Nobleton and Richmond Hill.

The Exchange Hotel was built around 1855 by John Higgins, son-in-law of George Kennedy (founder of Georgetown), and was owned by Kennedy for several years. The Grand Trunk Railway opened through Georgetown in 1856 and significantly impacted the development in the surrounding area.

In 1913, Harry Wright purchased the hotel from then proprietor Jack Kaiser. The Exchange Hotel was conveniently located along the Grand Trunk Railway, with 18 train stops a day in front of the hotel. The hotel was describe as having “comfortable and well-kept bedrooms, a dining room in which only good meals are served, and stabling accommodations in keeping with the other appointments of the house. There is a well stocked bar, and those who are in need of liquid refreshments are served with ales and liquors of all the standard brands” (*The Georgetown Herald*, December 17, 1913). The hotel hosted other businesses and services as well, including a meat market, cigar sales, and a barber shop.



Figure 9: Exchange Hotel, n.d. (Courtesy of the Georgetown Vault)

Harry Wright was a member of the Anglican Church, and a well-respected citizen in the Town. Wright died in November 1930.

Annie Elizabeth Porter, wife of Thomas Hubbard, lived with Harry and Arvilla at the subject property following the death of her husband. Annie had moved with the Wright family to Georgetown following

their move from Richmond Hill to become the proprietors of the Exchange Hotel and lived there until her death in 1941. Harry and Arvilla's daughter Kathleen is identified in the 1931 Census at 20 years old as a housekeeper at home on Queen Street in Georgetown, with her mother Arvilla and sister Dorothy (then 14). Dorothy and Kathleen operated the grocery store at the Exchange Hotel for a time.

Arvilla is identified as a hotel proprietor in the 1931 Census, continuing the work that she and her husband had done together. In the 1945 Voter's List for Halton, Wright is identified as a widow living in Georgetown. In 1951, she suffered a stroke; 10 years later, Arvilla died at her home on October 30, 1961.

The Exchange Hotel site, located adjacent to the railway, operated as a hotel and tavern until 2004 and was occupied until 2010. The east portion of the hotel had been operated by two of Harry's daughters, Dorothy, and Kay (Kathleen) (1911-1989). In 2003, Dorothy, who had taken over the hotel with husband Maurice Hillcock, was the proprietor of the hotel. Kay and her husband George Brandford (1925-1993) owned a grocery store at 86 Guelph Street. The Exchange Hotel site was later purchased by Habitat for Humanity to be used for affordable housing; the Exchange Hotel building is no longer extant.



Figure 10: Advertisement for Kay's Grocery (Georgetown Herald (Georgetown, ON), December 25, 1957, p. 9)



Figure 11: Kay's Grocery & Fresh Meats, c.1990 (EHS 10566)



Figure 12: Subject property identified in 1952 aerial photography



Figure 13: Subject property identified on the 1960 Fire Insurance Plan of Georgetown



Figure 14: Subject property identified in 1960 aerial photography

The property was transferred to Kathleen (Kay) through probate of will in 1958. From 1964, Kay owned the subject property until it was sold to H. Kaufman and S. Foster in 1988.

Current Ownership

The property changed hands several times between 1993 and 2011 when it was purchased by its current owners.

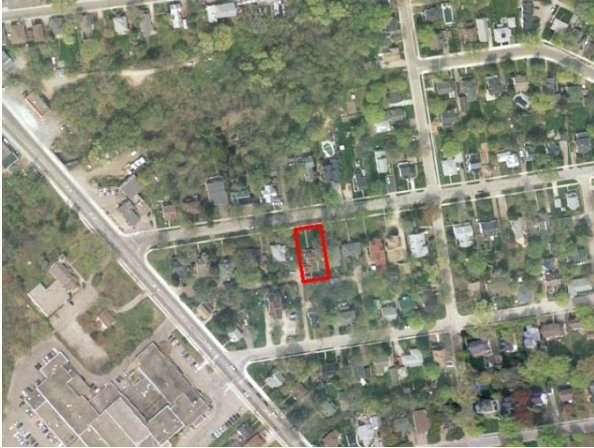


Figure 15: Subject property identified in 2005 aerial photography



Figure 16: Subject property identified in 2021 aerial photography

2.2 Property & Architectural Description



Figure 17: Subject property identified in 2023 aerial photography

The subject property is located along the southeast side of Queen Street in Georgetown within the Town of Halton Hills. The property is a rectangular lot, with Charity Street terminating at the southwest lot line, containing a two-storey L-shaped frame structure with cross-gable roof, brick cladding and a rear addition. Parking on the site is accessed from Charity Street at the rear. Like many of the houses along this side of Queen Street, the house is set back from the street on a hill and is accessed via a paved walkway and stairs.



Figure 18: Looking northeast along Queen Street towards the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 19: Looking southeast along Queen Street towards the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 20: Looking towards the subject property along Queen Street (Town of Halton Hills Files 2018)



Figure 21: Looking southeast towards the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The existing two-storey home is an excellent example of a residential Gothic Revival building built towards the end of the nineteenth century. The front (northwest) elevation features a projecting portion with a projecting bay with bracketed roof at the first storey with segmentally arched window openings within. Above the projecting bay are two symmetrically placed round arched window openings with buff brick voussoirs; these window openings are centrally placed beneath the gable above featuring wooden bargeboard. Buff brick quoining is features at the corners of this elevation.



Figure 22: Front (northwest) elevation of the existing building at 14-16 Queen Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 23: West corner of the existing building at 14-16 Queen Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The front elevation then steps back and is dominated by a covered wooden porch with hipped roof at the first storey which stretches across this portion of the façade. This wooden porch features turned wooden columns, with wooden brackets and detailing beneath the porch eaves. Buff brick quoining is

visible at the southwest corner of this elevation, and above the porch a round-arched window openings is centered beneath a gable peak and features buff brick voussoirs, visible behind the wooden bargeboard.



Figure 24: Front (northwest) elevation of the existing building at 14-16 Queen Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The side (southwest) elevation features a buff brick bay with flat-headed window openings (appears to have been a later addition), and at the second storey segmentally arched window openings centered on the elevation. As the elevation continues to the rear, a gable peak is located above a small window. Buff brick quoining is also visible on this elevation.

The northeast elevation is partially obscured from Queen Street with a wooden fence. Two segmentally arched window openings are located towards the Queen Street side of the elevation. At the rear of this section of the building is a segmentally arched window opening beneath the gable peak with buff brick quoins at the corner. A brick chimney is extant at the intersection of this elevation and the rear tail of the building which features a gable peak with a smaller window below.



Figure 25: Partial southeast elevation of the existing building (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 26: Partial northeast elevation of the existing building (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 27: Rear elevation of the existing building at 14-16 Queen Street (Town of Halton Hills Files, 2018)

2.3 Architectural Style

Victorian Gothic, or Gothic Revival buildings were incredibly popular in Ontario during the 1800s, with variations on the style in brick, wood, and stone across the province. Architectural details typically featured within the style include, but are not limited to:

- One-and-a-half storey or more rectangular or L-shaped form;
- Stone, brick, or board-and-batten exterior;
- Steeply pitched roof, typically with a front gable featuring decorative bargeboard, cross gables, and finials;

- Front bays;
- Various window shapes and sizes, including pointed-arch/lancet-arch and segmental arch;
- Central door featuring sidelights and transom;
- Dichromatic or polychromatic brick patterns; and,
- Verandahs.

The existing building at the subject property features a one-and-a-half storey L-shaped form, brick exterior, steeply pitched roof with front gable and cross gables, decorative bargeboard with finials, a front bay, segmentally arched window openings, an entrance with sidelights and transom, dichromatic brick, and a wooden verandah, making it an excellent example of a Gothic Revival residential building in the community of Georgetown.

3.0 Description of Heritage Attributes and Evaluation Checklist

The following evaluation checklist applies to Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the *Ontario Heritage Act*: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The criteria are prescribed for municipal designation of Heritage Properties under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The evaluation tables utilize an 'X' to signify applicable criteria and 'N/A' to signify criteria that are not applicable for this property.

Design or Physical Value	
Is rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method	X
Displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	X
Demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement	N/A

The property at 14-16 Queen Street has physical and design value as an excellent representative example of a late-nineteenth-century Gothic Revival residential building, featuring a one-and-a-half storey L-shaped form, brick exterior, steeply-pitched roof with front gable and cross gables, decorative bargeboard with finials, a front bay, segmentally-arched window openings, an entrance with sidelights and transom, dichromatic brick, and a wooden verandah. The existing wooden finials, bargeboard and decorative detailing on the wooden verandah, and use of dichromatic brick throughout display a high degree of artistic merit, making this home stand out along the streetscape.

Historical or Associative Value	
Has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to a community.	X
Yields, or has potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	N/A
Demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to a community	N/A

The property at 14-16 Queen Street is directly associated with the Wright family, and particularly Arvilla and Kathleen Wright. Originally built by carpenter Joseph McIntosh, the subject property was home to the Wright family for approximately 50 years. Harry and Arvilla Wright were the proprietors of the Exchange Hotel, originally located near the subject property along the Grand Trunk Railway Line. The Exchange Hotel, built in 1855 and no longer extant, was an important stop along the railway and

became a hub for different commercial enterprises and services throughout its history. Arvilla Wright owned this property for several decades until it was owned by her daughter Kathleen (Kay), who also worked at the Exchange Hotel with her sister Dorothy and who also owned a popular store in Georgetown.

Contextual Value	
Is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of an area	X
Is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings	X
Is a landmark	N/A

The property at 14-16 Queen Street has contextual value as it serves to define and maintain the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century character of the area surrounding the railway. Located within the residential neighbourhood surrounding the current Georgetown GO station, the subject property is physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings. Located on a rise above Queen Street, the house is of a similar scale to the surrounding residences and has not been identified as a landmark in the community.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 14-16 Queen Street has physical and design, historical and associative, and contextual value and therefore meets Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest.

The heritage attributes of the property at 14-16 Queen Street are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the existing building along Queen Street in Georgetown;
- The scale, form, and massing of the existing c.1880s, one-and-a-half storey Gothic Revival residential building with cross-gable roof and stone foundation;
- The materials, including dichromatic brick, stone sills, and wooden bargeboard and detailing throughout;
- The front elevation, including:
 - o The configuration of the elevation with two bays, with the northernmost bay projecting beyond the southern bay;
 - o Buff brick quoining and decorative wooden bargeboard;
 - o The one-storey projecting bay with bracketed roof, segmentally arched window openings with brick voussoirs and stone sills, with two round-arched windows with buff brick hood moulds below the gable peak featuring decorative wooden bargeboard;
 - o The entrance with glass transom above, flanked by window openings with stone sills beneath a covered wooden porch with decorative wooden detailing;
 - o Above the front porch, the round arched window opening with stone sill and buff brick hood mould beneath the gable peak featuring decorative wooden bargeboard;
- The side elevations, including:

- Segmentally-arched window openings and buff brick quoining on the northeast elevation; and,
- On the southeast elevation, paired segmentally arched window openings beneath the gable peak.

The rear elevation, rear addition, and interiors have not been identified as heritage attributes as part of this report. Additionally, although the existing one-storey bay on the southeast elevation is compatible with and sympathetic to the features of the c.1880s house, it is likely not original due to its design and has not been identified as a heritage attribute.

5.0 Sources

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Reference Number: *RG 31*; Folder Number: *62*; Census Place: *Georgetown, Halton, Ontario*; Page Number: *9*

Year: *1881*; Census Place: *Georgetown, Halton, Ontario*; Roll: *C_13258*; Page: *16*; Family No: *92*

Year: *1891*; Census Place: *Georgetown, Halton, Ontario, Canada*; Roll: *T-6340*; Family No: *175*

Year: *1901*; Census Place: *Georgetown (Village), Halton, Ontario*; Page: *12*; Family No: *137*

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